(d) Presently the priority of this Ministry is to develop the existing National Highways network for which huge investment is required.

Bad condition of NHs in Bihar

†4694. PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

whether it is a fact that on NH-57, a part of East-West National Highway situated in Bihar, the stretch from Jhanjharpur *via* Sakari is in quite dilapidated condition;

whether it is also a fact that in spite of allocating the construction work of NH-57 in four lanes to the agencies, neither any improvement has been made for transportation on the said stretch nor the work of constructing 'four lanes' has been started yet; and

if so, the justification thereof and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) to (c) The 4 laning projects of Muzaffarpur to Purnea section *(via* Darbhanga, Jhanjharpur, Fulparas, Sakri, Narhiya & Bhutaha) of NH-57 in Bihar under NHDP Phase-li have already been started during January, 2006 except for Kosi Bridge. The construction of bridge across Kosi River has already been awarded on annuity basis and construction work will start after financial closure which is expected to be achieved by the concessionaire shortly. During mobilization process, the pace of work has been slow due to various activities like construction of camp site, deployment of necessary equipment and man power etc. being done at the site by the contractor. Presently, the progress in respect of four laning has picked up.

The above stretch of NHDP Phase-ll is targeted for completion by December, 2007 except Kosi Bridge which is targeted by March 2010.

The section of NH-57 between Jhanjharpur *via* Sakri was in poor condition. Repair work is in progress and likely to be completed in another 2-3 weeks.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.